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ABSTRACT

Information is presented on attitudes of students enrolling for the first time at the University of New South Wales in 1975. Attitudes toward higher education, anticipated difficulties in making the transition from high school to university, and ideas about the likely demands and rewards of advanced study were surveyed, using a forced-choice questionnaire. Based on 2,973 responses, it was determined that most students have a fairly strong desire to attend the university and appear to be intellectually and/or vocationally committed to obtaining a degree. A large percentage also felt that they had the ability to seek honors and/or proceed to a higher degree. Very few students perceived the possibility of experiencing difficulties in adjusting to university life and appeared confident of being able to cope with the transition to the university. Findings indicate that the number of students who actually do better than just pass in all subjects is very small. There is a great discrepancy between how students expect to perform academically and how they do perform. Data from the student counseling and research unit suggest that many students do experience difficulties and seek assistance. It is suggested that students might be experiencing difficulties in working independently or judging the standards of performance required. Approaches are suggested for dealing with unrealistic expectations and aspirations of students. The entering student questionnaire is appended. (SW)

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Introduction.

In 1975 students enrolling for the first time at the University of New South Wales were asked to complete a questionnaire as part of a national survey of the social composition of tertiary students sponsored by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. This provided an apportunity to gather additional information relating to the attitudes of new students towards higher education, especially anticipated difficulties in making the transition from school to university, and ideas about the likely demands and rewards of advanced study. A short questionnaire (See Appendix 2.) of the forced-choice type, was designed in machine-readable form and frequency counts of the responses were obtained. This report presents the data gained from the survey.

Respondents.

Only those students enrolling at the University for the first time were requested to complete the attitude survey and a total of 2,973 questionnaires were returned to the Tertiary Education Research Centre for analysis. The official enrolment figures for first year in 1975 were 3,438 full-time[1] and 774 part-time[2] students. If it is assumed that the questionnaire was, in fact, only completed by students who have never been to university before than the responses represent approximately 75% of the possible number of students who could have completed the survey. This percentage is only very approximate since some graduate students could have inadvertently completed the questionnaire.

Student aspirations.

From a survey conducted in 1969 it emerged that students entering unversity had a high level of aspiration but also "an unrealistic assessment .. of their own capabilities, or of the present performance of students at universities".[3] This is also apparent in the responses of students entering the University in 1975. Most students (85%) had apparently been considering

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1 This figure includes 66 Bachelor of Laws students who are undertaking the Graduate LLB course and are therefore not entering University for the first time.

2 This figure includes 92 Bachelor of Architecture students who are in the fourth year of their university course and are classified as part-time students because they are required to work in a related occupation during the year. They also are not students entering university for the first time.

3 Katz, F.M. et al. The Freshers of 1969 - Characteristics and Performance. Sydney: Tertiary Education Research Centre, University of N.S.W., 1970, p. 16.

entering university for at least two years and 85% stated that they intended undertaking the whole of their course on a full-time basis. Consistent with the intentions that students had of entering university 89% suggested that their desire to be at university was fairly or extremely strong.

The remaining students who indicated that their desire to be at university was moderate, slight or negative may be the same students who indicated that they only decided to enter university because they could not think of anything else to do (2%) or that they only decided to come to university after obtaining their Higher School Certificate results (9%). It seems that these students are less committed to obtaining a university degree or may have decided to enter university because they were unable or unwilling to obtain employment in the present economic climate.

Students who decided to come to university several years after leaving school would have comprised unmatriculated mature age students as well as students who had attempted the Higher School Certificate since leaving school or who had been sent to university by their employer. In all cases it would appear that since they have taken the opportunity to do further study or made an effort to fulfil entry requirements that they are intellectually and/or vocationally committed to obtaining a degree.

As in the 1969 study cited above a high percentage of students (48%) indicated that they would be seeking honours in their degree, and 27% stated that they intended to enrol in a higher degree after completion of their first degree. The University statistics[4] for 1975 show the following enrolment figures.

TABLE 1.

Kensington	F/T	P/T	Staff/Ext*	Total
Higher Degree	776	1,368	180	2,324
Undergraduate	11,364	2,480	229	14,073
Postgraduate Diploma	508	162	-	670
Miscellaneous & Higher Degree Qualifying	27	461	-	488
	12,675	4,471	409	17,555

* "Staff" refers to Higher Degrees and "External" to all others.

[4] The University of New South Wales Statistics 1975. Sydney: University of N.S.W., 1975, p. 11.

The figures for honours graduates are not available for 1975. However data on students who graduated as at 30th June 1975 are shown below. These are students who successfully completed the requirements for both pass and honours degrees in 1974 or in the first semester of 1975.

TABLE 2.

Bachelor degrees with pass	2,375[5]
Bachelor degrees with honours	603
Total	2,978

A fairly tenuous inference can be drawn about the numbers of students who gain honours degrees by looking at the first year student enrolment for 1971 - the year in which most of the 1975 honours graduates were most likely to have enrolled. The number of students in first year in 1971 was 4,139. On the basis of this figure and the number of graduates in 1975 it may be reasonable to expec that somewhere in the order of 57%[6] of students will graduate in minimum time and that approximately 15% may graduate with honours. These figures are necessarily very approximate since students who completed their courses at the end of 1974 or in the first semester of 1975 and graduated in the latter year need not be the same students who commenced their degree in 1971. The actual numbers of students graduating (either with pass or honours) in minimum time may in fact be less than the percentages stated. Also, some degree courses extend over four years (e.g. Engineering) while some require only three years (e.g. Arts, Science), although the numbers of first year students enrolling in 1971 and 1972 were not significantly different (i.e. 4,139 and 4,279 respectivel

The number of students, therefore, who indicated in 1975 on entering the University that they would seek honours in their degree becomes unrealistic next to the numbers who actually gain honours - i.e 48% compared with approximately 15%.

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[5] This number includes 66 Arts students and 69 Science students who had fulfill the requirements of a pass degree but who did not take out their degree becau they were proceeding to honours.

[6] The only official figures for full-time graduation in minimum time for the U.N.S.W. appear in The 1961 Study where the percentage was 31.6. Dept. of Education and Science and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee The 1961 Study. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1971.

Similarly a comparison between students who say that they intend to proceed to higher degrees and the numbers who actually enrol in higher degrees shows an unrealistic expectation on the part of entering students. In 1975 there were 2,354 students enrolled for higher degrees (See Table 1) representing about 13% of the total student enrolment for that year. Of these, 799 were commencing students - that is, it was the first year of their enrolment for a higher degree - and only 482 students had proceeded to their higher degrees after completing undergraduate courses at the University of New South Wales. If it is assumed that these 482 students were from the 1971 intake - which is probably the case - then it might be expected that approximately 12% of students proceed to higher degrees. This figure should, of course, be treated with extreme caution because it does not take into account students who left the University of New South Wales to pursue degrees elsewhere. However, the order of magnitude of students enrolling and proceeding to higher degrees immediately upon completion of undergraduate degrees would appear to be about 12%. Compared with the expectation of students entering the University in 1975, where 27% intended to proceed to postgraduate study, the actual figures are quite low.

Since a large proportion of students indicated that they did intend seeking honours and/or proceedin g to a higher degree, it is not surprising to find that for 53% it is very important to do better than just pass in the subjects they are studying. This was of some importance for 41%, while 6% said they would be happy just to pass. (The full responses to these questions are shown in Appendix 1).

Adjustment to university.

The questionnaire suggested to the respondents that in previous years students had experienced difficulties in certain areas in adjusting to university life. Very few of the students entering the University in 1975, however, felt that any of these problems would apply to them. Again, this seems to suggest unrealistic views of what university is like and perhaps a feeling among keen and enthusiastic freshers that they are not quite like the students who have gone before them.

The following table demonstrates that students seem to have implicit faith in their own capabilities and a feeling that they will be able to motivate themselves and take responsibility for their own learning.

TABLE 3.

	A	B	C	D
Being taught in large classes	43	52	3	2
Having to participate in small group discussion	64	31	3	1
Having to seek out staff for consultation	54	40	4	1
Having little formal contact with teachers	47	43	6	3
Not having any friends at this university	36	31	10	22
Being uncertain what level of performance is required	25	59	7	5
No compulsion to attend class	75	14	2	8
Taking responsibility for my own learning	69	27	3	1
Having little or no choice in the subjects of my course	50	33	6	13
Receiving little information about my progress	23	60	14	3
Time spent travelling to and from university	32	43	18	5
Having to study subjects in which I do not have adequate background.	32	49	8	10

Key: A - I will not have any difficulty
B - I will have some difficulty
C - I will have great difficulty
D - Not applicable to me

Many of the above responses are difficult to interpret. The fact that students stated that they would have little or no difficulty in most of these areas does not necessarily reveal what their expectations were. Student who said, for example, that they would have little difficulty in "having to seek out staff for consultation" may mean that they have no reservation about approaching staff with problems, or it could mean that they don't feel that they will need to seek out staff because they don't envisage any problems arising, or it may simply be that they don't expect any problems in actually finding staff when they wish to see them. The same ambiguity in interpretation applies to most of the other statements listed in Table 3 - that is, students may either not see these as problem areas, or if they do feel that they would not have any difficulty in coping with them.

Either interpretation points up the unrealistic attitudes of students entering university for the first time. Some data on how students have adjusted both academically and socially to university life will help to highlight this situation. It is unfortunately true that data on previous students exist in these areas but they are not readily accessible and apparently do not find their way into the hands of prospective students.

Academic and social adjustment of students in previous years.

In the 1969 study, 78% of students indicated that they were aiming at credits or better in their undergraduate courses. An analysis of the examination results of these students at the end of 1969 revealed that "only 49%[7] of the total intake passed all subjects in their first year"[8] and of all the students enrolled only 7% obtained a credit or better in all subjects.

There is no reason to believe that the data are atypical and the rate of passes and graded passes would probably not fluctuate greatly from year to year, although they do vary between faculties. Also, although the failure rate in first year appears to be high it does not follow that this continues throughout degree courses. It is difficult to ascertain the number of students who proceed to their first degree in minimum time, but as stated earlier, it could be in the order of 57%, but it probably is somewhat less than this. If the figure is this high then it must be assumed that of students who sit for deferred examinations a reasonable percentage actually pass and proceed to second year and/or that many students carry one of their failed subjects and complete their courses in minimum time.

The expectations that students have of the academic demands of university show a marked divergence with the real situation. The fact that the failure rate is so high suggests that students are unable to cope with the demands made upon them. The reasons why they are unable to cope need not, of course, be due to the lack of intellectual ability, but rather due to problems such as adjustment to different teaching methods, social pressures and a sense of isolation in a large institution.

In 1974, for example, 2,427 students sought assistance from the staff of the Student Counselling and Research Unit on an individual basis[9]. The Unit also conducted group counselling programmes to which 1,559 students came, plus a self-help programme which catered for 61 students. Assuming that some students may have been included in all these programmes the percentage of students seeking assistance may be between 14% and 23%. The problems they had were in some cases academic, in others personal, vocational or psychological. The numbers suggest that, contrary to what students believe before entering university, in actual practice many students do require guidance and assistance in various areas. The number who actually seek help

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7 This figure only includes students who passed all examination in November and not students who sat and passed deferred examinations.

8 Katz, F.M. et al. The Freshers of 1969 - Characteristics and Performance. op.cit.p.1

9 Student Counselling and Research Unit. Annual Report 1974. Sydney: University of New South Wales. 1974.

from the Unit may also represent only a proportion of students who are experiencing problems in adjusting to university and there may be a considerable number who have serious problems but never seek assistance. Some of these may perservere at university and attempt to cope, others may simply drop out

In 1975 a study[10] was conducted by the Tertiary Education Research Centre of students who had successfully completed examinations and who could have re-enrolled to continue their undergraduate course but chose not to. There were about 1,200 such students: a disturbingly large number. The report suggests that this total be treated cautiously because the records included students who had taken a year's leave of absence, already graduated or had re-enrolled. Even allowing for such errors the numbers involved were large. Of the 204 students who completed questionnaires and had, in fact, dropped out of the University over half expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of the University itself, as opposed to dissatisfaction due to external factors. In view of the fact that 49% of students entering the University in 1975 indicated that they would put up with just about anything to get their degree, it could be assumed that a large proportion may in fact be dissatisfied with the University but are not prepared to leave.

Of students entering university in 1975, the largest percentage saw the greatest difficulty with time spent travelling to and from University. In fact this reason did account for 8% of the students who dropped out of University at the end of 1974. However, in terms of the total numbers who left only a small minority gave this as their principal reason for leaving.

Students expected little difficulty in coping with the academic aspects of university life and the area which seemed to worry most students was the possibility that they would receive little information about their progress. Fourteen percent of students envisaged this as possibly presenting a great difficulty while 60% admitted that they might have some difficulty. An equally large percentage of students (59%) thought there might be some difficulty with ascertaining the level of performance required of them. The question of feedback to students at university on their progress in academic work and the standards expected of them is a perennial problem. Students are no longer under the

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10 Lewandowski, K. et al. Academically Successful Students who did not Re-enrol at the University of New South Wales, 1975. R & D Paper, No. 40, Sydney: Tertiary Education Research Centre, University of New South Wales, 1976.

watchful eye of teachers who can guide their progress on a daily basis as at school, and they are left to their own resources in trying to ascertain what is an acceptable standard. The twofold problem of quantity (or frequency) and quality of feedback to students poses a real problem at university. Simply in terms of numbers it is virtually impossible for academic staff to monitor the quality of an individual student's work over a sustained period. This is particularly true for first year students who have the most difficult adjustment to make in taking responsibility for their own learning. Often classes in first year subjects are so large that staff simply cannot cope with all students at a personal level. Of necessity then, the frequency of feedback to students is low and only occurs, in most cases, after the student has been formally assessed. It is therefore only after the event that a student reaches some understanding of the level of performance required of him. To believe, as most entering students seem to, either that feedback will be frequent and thorough, or that students will have little difficulty in judging their progress and the level of performance required of them, represents naive attitudes and expectations in view of what actually happens at university.

Student expectations.

The following table shows student responses to questions about their commitment to and expectations of university.

TABLE 4.

	A	B	C	D
I expect very little of my course to be intellectually stimulating.	3	9	59	33
Given the amount of work in 1st year it would be a mistake for me to become really interested in any one subject.	4	25	59	12
I will put up with just about anything to get my university degree.	9	40	39	12
I will give up my course if I don't find it interesting.	5	30	51	14
I am likely to change my course/faculty.	5	13	50	33
I have little idea of what I want to do when I graduate.	4	15	41	39
I intend to give up most of my leisure and cultural activities to ensure getting through 1st year.	10	39	42	12
I expect I will enjoy being at university.	25	68	6	1
I expect it will be very difficult to pass.	6	43	46	5

Key: A - Strongly agree
B - Agree
C - Disagree
D - Strongly disagree

Although most students expected that their course would be intellectually stimulating, 12% disagreed that this would be the case. This is a seemingly large number of students - approximately 335 - and poses difficulties in explaining why such students chose to enter university at all. Some of the possible reasons are that students who did not get into the faculty or course of their first choice may have opted for the course they could get into, not expecting it to be intellectually stimulating but hoping to transfer to the course of their first choice in second year. This may account for some students who attempted to enter the Law or Medical Faculties but were forced to undertake another course such as Arts, Commerce or Science with a possibility of transfer. This may be the case with those 5% of students who strongly agreed that they were likely to change their course/faculty. In all, 18% of students said they were likely to do this and it seems that the most likely explanation for this large number is that students who did not enter the course of their first choice are committed to that choice and prepared to actively pursue their initial goal. It may also be that students have acquired more information about the university between the time of application and the time at which they completed this survey, and in view of this added information have decided they would like to change faculty and/or course.

If this is the case then there appears to be a need to provide students with adequate information about courses in each faculty before they are required to apply for university entrance. Such information would enable students to make an informed choice of course before they enrol and more importantly before they even apply to University.[11]

Other students may be particularly vocationally oriented and need their degree to pursue a career, but not expect to be intellectually stimulated by the course itself. Motivations such as high status, high salary or wider choice of job opportunities may lead students to undertake courses that will achieve these aims without their expecting to derive intellectual satisfaction or stimulation while undertaking them. On the other hand, of course, these students may simply have a realistic expectation of the courses they are about to undertake. They may know from friends or relatives who are, or have been, at university precisely what to expect in the way of intellectual stimulation. Again it is difficult to understand why such students would come to university unless it is for reasons other than the pursuit of learning -

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11 Katz, F.M. et al. Alternative Admission Systems for Tertiary Institutions in N.S.W. and the A.C.T.: Report to the New South Wales Higher Education Authority. Sydney: Tertiary Education Research Centre, University of N.S.W., 1975.

e.g. social life, prestige, or because they were expected to come and were pressured into it.

As opposed to those students who may be actively seeking to change course/faculty another group (presumably including the above students) indicated that they would give up their course if they did not find it interesting. Thirty-five percent of students agreed with this statement and again included 5% of students who strongly agreed with the statement. It is quite likely that those 5% who are likely to change course/faculty for the reasons given above are the same 5% who will give up the course if they don't find it interesting - presumably on the assumption that they are unable to transfer to the course/faculty of their first choice. Apart from these students - if in fact they do exist - there are still a large number who will give up courses that are not interesting. Two interpretations can be placed upon these responses. Either the students will leave university altogether, or they will attempt to change courses. Because such students are unaware of how interesting their courses will be they presumably intend to start their course and have not set out with the deliberate intention of changing: hence the difference between the number of these students and the 18% who stated that they are likely to change course/faculty. Lack of interest in a course will be manifested in different ways, so it is difficult to estimate how many change courses or leave university for this reason Responses from students in the drop-out study reveal that uninteresting courses was one reason for students leaving university but there must be many more students who did not study sufficiently and who failed examinations because the course was uninteresting. Unfortunately there are no data available on such students.

In direct contrast to this group of students are those who stated that they will put up with just about anything to get their university degree. Presumably these 49% of students are referring to either, or both, academic and social difficulties or deficiencies which they are prepared to ignore or attempt to cope with. It might be expected that such students are so committed and motivated to attain a degree that they will put up with poor teaching, poor facilities, difficulties of travel and many other factors. The reasons for such attitudes may lie in a vocational commitment, pressure from other people to succeed, or a wish to gain prestige and social status through the acquisition of a degree. Even though these motives are not necessarily to be condemned, it is unfortunate that such attitudes exist because they tend to reinforce an institutional attitude of laissez-faire in respect of students. That is, if students are prepared to put up with anything to obtain a degree than there is no pressure on the University to improve the institution as a place of learning and personal development for students as individuals.

Related to this question, is the willingness of students to give up most of their leisure and cultural activities to ensure getting through first year. An almost equally large number (47%) indicated that they were prepared to do this. It immediately becomes obvious from such a response that almost half the students entering university see a dichotomy between academic learning, and leisure and cultural activities. If universities are regarded as places where the whole person develops and learns, then a division between learning in the academic sense and learning in the cultural and personal sense must be artificial and undesirable. Again, if students expect this to be the case then the university will tend to reinforce those expectations. It may be that 45% of students have a realistic expectation that universities are really only interested in academic performance in which case the University is failing to fulfil its role. Fortunately a majority of students do not anticipate giving up their other activities and hopefully will pursue them all within and outside the University. It may be, of course, that the majority of students have an unrealistic perception of the role that the university at present plays in the development of individuals.

A large majority of students (71%) entertained the possibility of becoming really interested in a particular subject given the amount of work in first year. Again two interpretations can be given to this response. Either students don't believe that the workload in first year is high and therefore they will be able to concentrate on an interesting subject if they want to, or they have a reasonable idea of the demands made on first year students and still feel they can cope with the work and concentrate on an interesting subject. The remaining students (2 %) who agreed with the statement are presumably expecting heavy demands in terms of first year workload.

A surprisingly small number of students (19%) suggested that they did not have much idea of what they want to do when they graduate. This could be a function of the high percentage of students enrolled in the vocationally oriented or professional faculties where graduates are produced with qualifications for specific occupations. However, the enrolment statistics for 1975 show that approximately 30% of students are enrolled in the general degrees of Arts and Science[12] so it may be that even a large number of these students have definite plans upon graduation.

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12 Students enrolled in Pure and Applied Chemistry, are not included in this category.

On the more general questions of enjoyment of university and difficulty in passing, students were mostly optimistic. Ninety-three percent of students expected to enjoy university and 51% did not think it would be very difficult to pass. Seven percent did not expect to enjoy being at university and several explanations might be offered to account for this response. Students, for example, who did not enter the faculty or course of their first choice and who see little possibility of transferring may feel that they want a university degree but will not particularly enjoy an alternative course. Students who are highly vocationally oriented may come to university to achieve a long-range goal but not expect to enjoy doing the course. Some students who were pressured into undertaking university courses may be determined not to enjoy studying and some students may be aware that university involves a lot of hard work and are not looking forward to it, even though they may be interested in their course of study. On the non-academic side, some students may want to come to university but may feel that the absence of any friends will detract from their enjoyment. In fact, 10% of students did suggest that they would have great difficulty because they did not have friends at the University.

Despite the fact that only a minority of students perceived any specific difficulties in adjusting to university (see Table 3) 49% did indicate that they expected it would be difficult to pass. Since only 7% said they would encounter difficulties in ascertaining the level of performance required, and only 14% were worried about the amount of information they would receive on their progress, it is a little difficult to understand why so many students expect that it will be difficult to pass. Possibly one explanation is that they expect there will be a lot of work to cope with since nearly half the students also indicated that the amount of work in first year would preclude special interest in one particular subject.

Perhaps entering students are also aware that there is a high failure rate in first year and that even though they do not envisage any specific difficulties they have a general feeling that it may be difficult to pass. Maybe some students are also doubtful about their own capacity to meet the intellectual demands of the university course they are undertaking.

Conclusion.

The analysis and interpretation of the data in this report should be treated with some care. Although the response rate was approximately 75%, the data does not represent all students' opinions, although it may be assumed to fairly reflect the general trend of students' attitudes and expectations. Also it was not possible to obtain a breakdown of responses by faculty so it is possible that some faculties are over- or under-represented.

The interpretation of the data is based on a generalised view of the University of New South Wales and it should be pointed out that differences do, of course, exist between schools and/or faculties with respect to meeting the expectations of students and in assisting students in their adjustment to university life.

Given these constraints on the results of the study, several factors emerge in respect of the attitudes, expectations and aspirations of students entering university for the first time. Most students, for example, have a fairly strong desire to be at university and appear to be intellectually and/or vocationally committed to obtaining a degree. A large percentage also felt that they have the ability to seek honours and/or proceed to a higher degree and for most students it was therefore important to do better than just pass in the subjects they were studying.

Very few students perceived the possibility of experiencing difficulties in adjusting to university life and appeared confident of being able to cope with the transition from school to university. Again, nearly all students expected to enjoy being at university and expected their courses to be intellectually stimulating. Within this larger group, there were two-sub-groups of students - those who indicated they would give up their course if it was not interesting and those who indicated that they would put up with just about anything to get their degree.

Data on student performance and progress at university, however, provides a different picture. The number of students who actually do better than just pass in all their subjects is very small. The percentage of students who graduate with honours and/or proceed to higher degrees is only in the order of 15% and 12% respectively, and in fact the percentage of students who graduate in minimum time or even graduate at all has been shown in the past to be low as 31.8% and 59% respectively.[13] There is obviously a great discrepancy between how students expect to perform academically and how students actually perform.

In terms of adjustment to university, data from the Student Counselling and Research Unit suggest that many students do experience difficulties and seek assistance. The failure rates also suggest that students might be experiencing difficulties other than lack of intellectual ability, such as an inability to work independently or being unable to judge the standards of performance required. Again there is a discrepancy between students' expectations and what happens in practice.

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13 The 1961 Study. op.cit., p.21.

As seen in the 1969 study[14], and again in this study, students have unrealistic expectations and aspirations about their own adjustment to and performance at university. Given that such gaps exist between expectation and reality there are some solutions which suggest themselves to close this gap. Firstly it may be that students' expectations and aspirations are too high and these should be lowered either by the present method of allowing them to discover for themselves after they enter university that their is a discrepancy, or by providing them with information before they enter university on what they are likely to encounter in the way of intellectual and personal demands upon them. This would necessitate apprising students of the facts about failure and graduation rates, about the difficulties most often encountered by students seeking assistance from the Counselling Unit, and of the fact that a large percentage of entering students are likely to find themselves in similar situations.

The other solution is to attempt to meet the expectations of students by providing a more suitable environment whereby students experience less difficulty in adjusting and can pursue their own intellectual and personal development with as little hindrance as possible. If it is accepted that part of the function of the university is "the development of the mind and the personal qualities of the student"[15] then there is some responsibility on the part of the staff of the University to put this aim into practice. This involves a high level of staff-student contact and a willingness of staff to put some effort into the guidance of students' development. Unfortunately while teachers are rewarded more for research than for teaching there is a tendency to "put the onus for learning on the student[16]. This leads to the situation where the teacher tends to be subject-oriented rather than student-centred. The transition for students from school to university involves just this dichotomy - from a situation where the student is the focus of attention, to the situation where the student becomes almost peripheral to the discipline being taught.

In order to meet students' expectations and to help them achieve their aspirations changes are required in the present university system. Improved teaching methods, greater staff-student contact, more guidance for students as to what is expected of them in terms of intellectual standards and performance and more frequent and thorough feedback on their progress would all assist in closing the gap between what students expect of university before they enter, and what they presently discover after they have entered.

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14 Katz, F.M. et al. Op.cit.

15 Schonell, F.J. "Student Adaptation and its Bearing on Achievement", The Australian University, 1, No. 1, pp. 60-88, 1963.

16 Genn, J.M. - "Final-Year School Teaching and First-Year University Teaching: What's the Difference? Why the Difference? and so what?" The Australian University, 11, No. 3, pp. 230-8, 1973.

APPENDIX 1.

TABLE 1.

When did you first decide to do a university course?	%
It has been my intention for a long time to enter university	65
I decided to enter university during my last two years at school	18
I was not sure what I wanted to do but I decided when I got my Higher School Certificate results.	9
My decision was made several years after leaving school.	6
I couldn't think of what else to do.	2

TABLE 2.

Do you anticipate that you will change from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) at some time during your course?	
No - I intend to remain full-time	85
No - I intend to remain part-time	6
Yes - I anticipate changing from full-time to part-time	3
Yes - I anticipate changing from part-time to full-time	6

TABLE 3.

How strong is your desire to be at university?	
Extremely strong	53
Fairly strong	36
Moderate	9
Slight	1
I don't want to be here at all	-*

* four students indicated that they did not want to be at university at all.

TABLE 4.

Do you intend to seek honours in your degree?	
Yes	48
No	14
No idea	33
There are no honours in my course	4

TABLE 5.

After completing your first degree do you intend to enrol in a higher degree (e.g. Masters, Ph.D.)	%
Yes	27
No	23
No idea	50

TABLE 6.

Generally how important is it for your to do better than just pass in the subjects you study?	
Very important	53
Of some importance	41
Unimportant - I will be happy to pass	6
I am not concerned whether I pass or fail	3

APPENDIX 2.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

TERTIARY EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENTERING STUDENTS, 1975

Please answer the following questions on the separate answer sheet. Follow the directions for using the answer sheet carefully and enter your name in the space provided.

When you have answered the questions please put both the answer sheet and the questionnaire inside the questionnaire "A Study of Students Entering Tertiary Education".

1. When did you first decide to do a university course?

   A It has been my intention for a long time to enter university.
   B I decided to enter university during my last two years at school
   C I was not sure what I wanted to do but I decided when I got my Higher School Certificate results.
   D My decision was made several years after leaving school.
   E I couldn't think of what else to do.

2. Do you anticipate that you will change from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) at some time during your course?

   A No - I intend to remain full-time
   B No - I intend to remain part-time
   C Yes - I anticipate changing from full-time to part-time
   D Yes - I anticipate changing from part-time to full-time

3. How strong is your desire to be at university?

   A Extremely strong
   B Fairly strong
   C Moderate
   D Slight
   E I don't want to be here at all

4. Do you intend to seek honours in your degree?

   A Yes
   B No
   C No idea
   D There are no honours in my course

5. After completing your first degree do you intend to enrol in a higher degree (e.g. Masters, Ph.D.)?

   A Yes
   B No
   C No idea

6. Generally how important is it for your to do better than just pass in the subjects you study?

   A Very important
   B Of some importance
   C Unimportant - I will be happy to pass
   D I am not concerned whether I pass or fail

Some students have mentioned things as affecting their adjustment to Universit
Use the following scale to indicate how you think they may affect you.

   A I will not have any difficulty
   B I will have some difficulty
   C I will have great difficulty
   D Not applicable to me

7. Being taught in large classes.
8. Having to participate in a small group discussion.
9. Having to seek out staff for consultation.
10. Having little formal contact with teachers.
11. Not having any friends at this university.
12. Being uncertain what level of performance is required.
13. No compulsion to attend classes.
14. Taking responsibility for my own learning.
15. Having little or no choice in the subjects of my course.
16. Receiving little information about my progress.
17. Time spent travelling to and from the university.
18. Having to study subjects in which I do not have adequate background.

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement using the following scale:

   A Strongly agree
   B Agree
   C Disagree
   D Strongly disagree

19. I expect very little of my course to be intellectually stimulating.
20. Given the amount of work in 1st year it would be a mistake for me to become really interested in any one subject.
21. I will put up with just about anything to get my university degree.
22. I will give up my course if I don't find it interesting.
23. I am likely to change my course/faculty.
24. I have little idea of what I want to do when I graduate.
25. I intend to give up most of my leisure and cultural activities to ensure getting through 1st year.
26. I expect I will enjoy being at the university.
27. I expect it will be very difficult to pass.